



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

To: Joint Committee on Energy and Technology
From: Linda Blozie
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Date: February 3, 2010
Re: SB 98: An Act Prohibiting Spoofing and Cramming

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Member Shelter Programs

The Umbrella
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Women & Families
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center
Danbury, CT

United Services, Inc.
Domestic Violence Programs
Dayville, CT

Network Against Domestic Abuse
Enfield, CT

Greenwich YWCA
Domestic Abuse Service
Greenwich, CT

Interval House
Hartford, CT

Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis
Meriden, CT

New Horizons
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain, CT

Domestic Violence Services
New Haven, CT

Women's Center of SE CT
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

United Services, Inc.
Domestic Violence Programs
Willimantic, CT

Good afternoon, Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello and members of the Joint Committee on Energy and Technology. My name is Linda Blozie and I am the Director of Public Affairs for the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Thank you for accepting my testimony regarding Senate Bill 98: An Act Prohibiting Spoofing and Cramming.

The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) greatly appreciates your efforts to address impersonation through Caller Identification (ID) devices. The misuse of technology by domestic abusers and other criminals is an important issue and CCADV would be honored to work with the Committee to address Caller ID spoofing in a manner that also protects the safety of victims of domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.

CCADV is a membership organization representing 18 domestic violence programs, who in turn serve approximately 60,000 victims of domestic violence each year. CCADV also represents our local domestic violence programs as a member of the Safety Net Project. The Safety Net Project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence is the only national initiative addressing the intersection of domestic violence

and all forms of technology. Safety Net tracks emerging technology issues and their impact on victim safety, working with local, State and Federal agencies to amend or create policies that enhance victim safety and confidentiality.

Domestic violence abusers are increasingly misusing a variety of telephone, surveillance and computer technologies to threaten, harass and stalk their victims. It is not uncommon for an abuser to misuse multiple technologies at once while also employing more traditional tactics. Today, something as simple as relying on caller ID has become a method to harass victims. Victims often answer calls thinking they are from supportive family and friends only to find their abuser on the other end of the line. Caller ID spoofing not only allows an abuser to continue to engage with a victim, it can also take away the support system a victim has in place. False identification of a caller can lead to further isolation of a victim because they cannot trust the authenticity of any phone call they are receiving. Among the reports of Caller ID spoofing by domestic violence victims, there was an instance in which an abuser made contact with a victim by using the phone numbers of the State's Attorneys' office and the New Haven Police Department.

While abusers misuse this technology, there is also a positive use of alternate caller ID. Service providers who assist victims must have the option to sometimes provide alternate Caller ID information to shield their confidential location. Since Caller ID became available in the Connecticut, phone companies have allowed individuals to block their phone number from appearing in a Caller ID device. Most local domestic violence programs use this feature to block Caller ID for outgoing calls to increase the safety of victims, as abusers may become more dangerous if they see a domestic violence shelter name in the Caller ID device. This is important because many victims seek help while they are still living with the abusers, and the service provider must be able to return the victims' calls without placing them in greater jeopardy.

Today, we are asking you to support Senate Bill 98: An Act Prohibiting Spoofing and Cramming. It is critical to protect victims from harmful Caller ID impersonation while ensuring that domestic violence programs who offer confidential services are able to do so in a way that protects victims. Thank you.